Mihrdat IV

(r. 411 - 435)

BRIEFING

Mihrdat IV (Georgian: მირდატ IV, Latinized as *Mithridates*), of the Chosroid Dynasty, was the king (*mepe*) of Iberia (Kartli, eastern Georgia) from c. 409 to 411.

He was the son of Aspacures III and the grandson (on his mother's side) of Trdat. The Georgian chronicles criticizes him for impiety and neglect of religious building, and informs us that he opposed both major regional powers, the Roman and Sassanid empires. Defeated by the Sassanid army, he was captured and deported to Iran, where he died.

BIOGRAPHY

The main historical source about the life of King Mirdat IV is the collection of medieval Georgian chronicles "Kartlis Tskhovreba".

Mirdat's son was King Varaz-Bakur III and his second wife, an unknown daughter of Prince Trdat's. At the time of their father's death in 394, Varaz-Bakur's sons, Mirdat's and his half-brother Pharsmanes, were still young children. Therefore, Mirdat's grandfather Trdat's became the new monarch of Iberia. Nothing is known about the next fifteen years of Mirdat's life. During this period, the rulers of Iberia were first Trdat's and, after his death in 406, Mirdat's brother Pharsmanes IV. When Pharsmanes IV died in 409, Mirdat's own ascended the throne.

Unlike Mirdates IV's two predecessors on the Iberian throne, Georgian chronicles offer a rather unflattering characterization of this king, reporting that he was "*weak in his adherence to the faith*" and did not devote sufficient attention to the construction of Christian churches. His pride and arrogance led to the rupture of the allied relations between Iberia and the Byzantine Empire, and his short-sighted disregard for the threats of Shah Yazdegerd I, the ruler of Sassanid Iran, led to the invasion of his domains by a large Persian army. Relying on his military talent, Mirdates IV marched against his enemies with a small army and, despite his personal courage, suffered a heavy defeat in battle. According to Juansher Juansheriani's "Life of Vakhtang Gorgasali", Mirdat, captured by a Persian commander, was taken by the victors to Ctesiphon and died there soon after. The Iberian kingdom was devastated by the Persians, and members of the royal family were forced to seek refuge in a remote settlement in the lands of Kakheti.

The new ruler of Iberia was Archil, the only son of Mirdat IV and Queen Anusha.